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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 003316

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [PGOV](#) [IZ](#)  
SUBJECT: NEXT STEPS ON COUNTERING PKK

REF: A. ANKARA 2440  
[1](#)B. ANKARA 2240  
[1](#)C. SEPTEMBER 10 BAGHDAD OI  
[1](#)D. BAGHDAD 3128  
[1](#)E. BAGHDAD 2748  
[1](#)F. BAGHDAD 2419

Classified By: Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: The signed September 28 bilateral agreement on combating terrorism provides an opening for increased GOI-GOT cooperation and action against the PKK. Given the moribund trilateral U.S.-Turkey-Iraq process, we should encourage the Iraqi and Turkish governments to continue taking positive public bilateral steps with our full support. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (C) The interior ministers signed the "Agreement between the Republic of Turkey and the Republic of Iraq on Combating Terrorism" after marathon four-day negotiations (ref a). The GOI is interested in further developing constructive ties with Turkey, and recognizes that a lack of action against the PKK is a significant impediment to that aim. As PM Maliki's advisor al-Rikabi noted recently, Turkey is the neighboring country with which Iraq is most likely to be able to have "normal" relations (ref d). However, given the delicate balance of national Iraqi politics, Iraqi Kurds must be on board. Turkey and Iraq signed the September 28 agreement, for example, without a controversial provision the GOT sought that would have allowed for "hot pursuit" of terrorists across international borders in case of incursion, without prior notification. The negotiators moved this provision to an annex to the accord and agreed to continue discussion. Both the agreement and PM Maliki name the PKK a terrorist organization, a step specifically requested by the GOT. The agreement also provides a mechanism for intelligence and law enforcement cooperation. (Note: A copy of the agreement was e-mailed to EUR/SE and NEA/I on October 1. End Note)

[1](#)3. (C) Turkish President Gul and other Turkish officials have quietly signaled an increased willingness to open direct higher-level dialogue with Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) officials (ref b). KRG Minister of Interior Karim Sinjari and KRG Presidential Advisor Safeen Diyazee told us in early September that they, too, saw an opportunity for progress on GOT-KRG relations after the Turkish elections (ref c). The trilateral process stalled earlier this year in large part on the GOT's reluctance to meet officially with the KRG.

[1](#)4. (C) Given the opportunity provided by the signed agreement, increased signals Turkey might consider direct talks with the KRG and the lack of action on the trilateral

side, we might consider encouraging:

-- the GOT to initiate talks with President Talabani, preferably separately from the Neighbors Ministerial in Istanbul so as not to distract from the wider neighbors' agenda or from PM Maliki. We should explore whether the Turks have enough political cover now to invite President Talabani for a state visit;

-- both the GOI and GOT to ratify the agreement, with or without the annex on "hot pursuit," within three months as called for under the agreement (i.e., by the end of December). We should help ensure buy-in by the KRG on any ratified agreement;

-- lower-level talks on the margins of the Istanbul Neighbors Ministerial between KRG and Turkish officials, perhaps with our involvement via the trilateral process;

-- the GOT to invite KRG Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani to Ankara for talks;

-- the GOT to observe with GOI, KRG and/or U.S. officials the closure of PKK-affiliated offices. The GOT has yet to respond to the invitation to do so;

-- joint action by GOI and GOT against the PKK under the auspices of the agreement once it is ratified, including such actions as extradition of PKK-related suspects, intelligence-sharing and even possible joint military operations.

15. (C) We welcome Embassy Ankara and the Department's views on these suggestions and other steps that might be taken to

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move forward on countering the PKK.  
CROCKER